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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Fech, Flowers, Konecky, Lindquist, McCollough, Shea, Stock

Absent: Bolin, Franti, LaCost, Prochaska-Cue, Rapkin, Schubert

Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2009

Location: 201 Canfield Administration Building

Note: These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the Executive Committee meeting as corrected by those participating.

1.0 Call to Order

Fech called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Perlman/VC Owens

2.1 Budget

Fech noted that the budget cuts were not as bad as had been anticipated. Chancellor Perlman agreed but pointed out that it is unclear whether we are totally out of the problem yet. He stated that he is comfortable defending the cuts he recommended. He stated that he is interested in hearing what the Academic Planning Committee is thinking. He noted that if predictions are similar for next year's state revenue we could be looking at another \$1.1 million cut.

Fech stated that having more transparency, relatively early in the process has been helpful along with the website where people could offer suggestions regarding cuts.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he was aware about the debate in the Senate about the budget cutting process being more collaborative, but he does not really know how this can be done. He noted that he witnessed how the 1993 budget cutting process was a very messy and awful process. He pointed out that it would be unseemly to have faculty members deciding what departments should be cut in order for them to save their own department. He stated that he tried to solicit suggestions on how to make cuts by creating the on-line suggestion box. He noted that he is still open to ideas if people think there are ways to deal with these obstacles.

Chancellor Perlman reported that some of the budget cuts will not need a hearing because they have already been accomplished because they involved open positions.

Fech recalled that the Executive Committee discussed during the previous budget cuts the difficulty of pinning one department against another. He noted that there is a danger in tentatively identifying a department as a potential budget cut but then not cutting it. The previously targeted department can leave the faculty members feeling very vulnerable.

He noted that the real issue is one of shared governance and how it can be better incorporated into the budget cutting process.

Chancellor Perlman noted that Washington State University is going through an exceedingly difficult financial time and many tenured faculty members have been cut.

2.2 CIO Search Update

Fech noted that three excellent candidates were on campus interviewing for the Chief Information Officer position. Chancellor Perlman agreed and stated that it was difficult to decide who to offer the position to. He noted that an agreement was reached with Mark Askren from the University of California at Irvine. He reported that Askren will begin working at the University of August 10th and is very excited to be coming to UNL.

Fech noted that the faculty was particularly interested in this position. Chancellor Perlman stated that each candidate had a lot of support and it was difficult to try to rank them. He noted that Askren brings a lot of good experience and he feels that Askren will be able to move the campus forward.

2.3 Search for Dean of the College of Journalism & Mass Communications

Chancellor Perlman stated that several searches will need to be conducted this year. He noted that Senior Vice Chancellor Couture will be contacting the Faculty Senate for a faculty representative on the search committee. He reported that another search will need to be conducted for the Dean of the Law College and probably for the Dean of the College of Business Administration as well.

2.4 Position Description for Administrative Positions

Fech stated that it would be helpful for the Executive Committee, when interviewing candidates for administrative positions, to have a copy of the position description. Chancellor Perlman stated that this is not a problem and the position description should be on the web.

2.5 Life Sciences – Next Step?

Chancellor Perlman reported that good feedback was given at the recent open forum. He stated that he has met with both the internal committee and an external group of constituents to discuss the report written by the outside consultants. He stated that at a retreat of the senior administrators in June there was discussion on how to move forward on this issue. He noted that good ideas were presented and some efforts are already in progress but he is also bouncing off some of these ideas with the internal and external groups. He stated that as feedback from these groups is received, some revisions are being considered.

Vice Chancellor Owens reported that there have been more formal discussions with Dean Manderscheid and Dean Waller about the life sciences. He noted that the review team recommended three different locations where the life sciences have come together and a group from UNL is being sent to review how these disciplines are working together at these institutions.

2.6 Outside Reference Letters for Promotion & Tenure

Vice Chancellor Owens noted that the Life Sciences Review Team made the strong suggestion that there be similar policies between IANR and Academic Affairs, particularly in regards to outside letters of reference for promotion and tenure. He noted that he and SVCAA Couture have had discussions on this topic, but there are some differences between the two campuses because of the extension faculty. He stated that it is more common to have outside letters of reference and a more reassuring process when outside reference letters are used.

Fech pointed out that several Executive Committee members were concerned that the amount of outside reference letters has been increasing significantly. He noted that faculty members are also interested in obtaining clear instructions regarding these letters and what kind of information the administration is looking for in the letters. VC Owens agreed that this is a concern that many people have and this has been a topic of discussion for more than a year.

Lindquist asked what the timeline is for when we will see some information on a campus policy regarding outside reference letters. VC Owens stated as rapidly as possible, although it is impossible to implement a policy this first year but certainly in sequential years. He noted that some faculty members may need to be grandfathered in. He pointed out that the College of Education and Human Sciences had to deal with both sets of faculty members when it was merged. He stated that the policy would apply to all new hires and within two or three years everyone would be migrated into the new procedures.

2.7 Upcoming Issues

Chancellor Perlman noted that the Bylaws and faculty expect evaluations of administrators every five years to determine whether the administrator should remain in their office. While he thinks this is a good idea, he is uneasy about the existing process. He pointed out that he was just recently evaluated and was impressed with the process that was used. He reported that an outside firm was hired to conduct the evaluation process. The process required that he be interviewed by the firm, prepare a written statement, and provide a list of people that he interacts with. Approximately 27 of these people were then interviewed by the firm. A report was prepared by the firm for President Milliken and himself. He stated that the process was enlightening and provides the ability for follow ups.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he is toying with the idea of using the same kind of evaluation process for administrators but it is expensive. He pointed out that the current process used by the campus is an exercise in energy without effectiveness. He noted that surveys are sent out but there is usually only a 10%, or at best, 20% response rate. He thinks by using the outside firm there will be a higher level of confidence in the evaluation process.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he is still thinking about this and will bring a better proposal back to the Executive Committee, possibly in early fall, so the Committee can respond to the idea.

Chancellor Perlman noted that the consultants will be on campus in early Fall to share some of their ideas on Innovation Campus. He stated that more transparent and open forums will be held. He reported that some companies have shown interest and discussions are being held with people in Lincoln, Omaha, and other places about the Campus. He noted that a lot of outreach to various groups is taking place regarding Innovation Campus and he believes faculty members have been actively involved in this process.

Fech noted that there was good discussion at the Board of Regents meeting about Innovation Campus. He pointed out that he has met with ASUN President Megan Collins who is very interested in opportunities for student involvement with Innovation Campus. Chancellor Perlman reported that Collins is on the steering committee for Innovation Campus and when the open forums occur students will be able to participate.

Fech reported that he was contacted by faculty members who were pleasantly surprised with the university picking up the increased cost in health insurance. He noted that faculty members greatly appreciate this. He stated that there is a group of 43 faculty members who will not receive the benefit because they are covered under the Federal Civil Service health and retirement benefits. He asked if these people can receive any of the new benefit. Chancellor Perlman stated that he was sorry, but he did not think the benefits could allow for any kind of adjustments. He pointed out that benefits are controlled by Varner Hall.

3.0 Professors John Bender and Craig Eckhardt

3.1 Academic Planning Committee

Fech asked if there were any major concerns the faculty need to be aware of in regards to the budget cutting process and if there was any possibility of a structural change in the future. He stated that there was a discussion in the Senate at the end of the spring semester concerning drastic structural changes to the budget reduction procedures.

Bender reported that the APC was going to be meeting tomorrow and the primary business was to set a schedule for hearing appeals on the budget cuts. He stated that given the nature of the cuts there may not be a lot of appeals, but he pointed out that those affected by the cuts should have the opportunity to appeal the cut. He stated that depending on the number of appeals, he would expect the process to be completed between October and Thanksgiving.

Lindquist asked what the APC's general thinking is regarding the recently announced cuts. Bender stated that the campus was lucky this time around and the cuts were not as big as originally feared. He noted that these cuts do not raise the issue of tenure and academic freedom but the APC has not had a lot of in depth discussion on the cuts yet.

Lindquist pointed out that the ARD administration states that 14 people will be affected in some way but the cuts have the potential of impacting possibly as many as 56 people. He stated that units are having discussions on how they are going to handle covering 25% of a research technologists' salary since state support for these positions will be cut. Bender stated that the APC wants to make sure people have the opportunity to make reasonable responses to the cuts. He stated that he did not think we are in a hurry to make these cuts.

Lindquist noted that if units cannot come up with 25% of the salary needed for the research technologists than people will possibly be fired. Shea pointed out that the cuts to ARD are being placed on the units and if soft money cannot be identified the FTE will be reduced from some of the technologists, or the position will no longer exist which could result in more than 14 people losing their jobs. He noted that some professors might have easier access to funding than others because of grants.

Bender asked what the likely impact will be to a program if some of these positions are lost. Lindquist stated that as a unit the impact could be huge. He noted that units are being asked to rank faculty members to determine who should receive support for their technologists. McCollough asked what the alternative would be if the unit does not make this decision. Lindquist noted that there could be issues that are not apparent until cuts are made and it is unclear who will get cut.

Fech pointed out that quality of work may not be a factor in who is retained; rather it will be based on what units can find funding to support these people.

Bender asked who will ultimately make the decision about how the cuts are going to be administered. Lindquist stated that ultimately it will be the head of a unit although faculty members in units are being asked for suggestions. Proposals will then be presented to VC Owens. He noted that things appear to work differently in departments where the chair is part of the faculty.

Eckhardt noted that decisions cannot be made until the fall term begins. Lindquist stated that ARD has already stated that plans need to be made, although the decisions will not be made until September or October. He pointed out that no one will know who actually will lose the funding until that time. He stated that everybody who has a technical support person is concerned.

Fech asked who will speak for the group of people being cut or if there will be a group voice. Lindquist stated that, at this point, he has not heard that large of a concern to make faculty members want to make a formal complaint to the APC.

Flowers noted that the nature of these cuts does not really provide a test for what the hearings should be like. He pointed out that there was some concern during the 2003 budget cuts that procedures were not exactly followed.

Eckhardt stated that he has urged that there be changes in the procedures, but this mild a cut buys us time to make some changes to the procedures. However, if action is not taken the faculty will be vulnerable. He urged the Committee to really push on getting the procedures ironed out a little better. He noted that Nebraska might be more fortunate than other parts of the country but typically we lag the rest of the country by 12 – 18 months so we could be hit badly in the future. He pointed out that there is a small window in which the faculty can act.

Fech asked if the next step in the process is for the APC to hold hearings. Bender stated that this is the next step but the hearings won't be held until after the fall semester begins. Eckhardt noted that some hearings could be held in the summer because there are continuing programs that run year round. He noted that the more time people are allowed to plan for their being laid off, the better for them. He stated that the APC should act for those that it can now, so as to provide these people with more time to plan. He pointed out that there may need to be two sets of hearings.

Fech asked how many hearings the APC would anticipate. Eckhardt stated that he does not know. He thought that maybe having one day of hearing in July for continuous programs and one in September might work. He pointed out that the cuts are not as deep as in 2003 and some of the cuts have already occurred. He stated that his concern is 18 months from now and he thinks the faculty should be more organized to possibly deal with deeper cuts.

Fech noted that the motion made by Professors Wunder and Peterson in the Senate failed but not by a large margin. He stated that had it passed it would have called for dramatic changes in the procedures. He suggested that it would be better to have some middle ground on the procedures.

Eckhardt noted that the APC and Faculty Senate have been cast into a reactive position with the current procedures. He pointed out that there should be some clarification of the procedures and there should be consultation with the chair of the APC about when meetings dealing with the budget will be scheduled.

Bender stated that Professors Wunder and Peterson raised some good criticisms about the way the current procedures are structured and the lack of transparency. He pointed out that faculty participation is very important with the budget cutting process. He noted that the APC is to recommend alternatives to the cuts recommended by the Chancellor, but this is difficult for the APC to do without access to some pertinent information. He stated that there needs to be an obligation from the administration to share the needed information.

Eckhardt reported that the APC subcommittee received some information on the budgets but the information does not really say what are functioning units and what are troubled units. He suggested allowing the APC to query the deans about programs and whether some units are having difficulties. He stated that he thinks the academic program reviews

are open to the public. He suggested that better records on salient points of academic program reviews be kept so these can be reviewed.

Eckhardt stated that cuts made by the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors may not be the APC's prerogative, but when cuts are made that impact academics or students then the APC should do something to formulate alternative cuts.

Fech asked if academic program reviews are considered when cuts are made. Eckhardt pointed out that no one knows how the administration reaches its decision.

Shea asked if the academic program reviews are consistent with the cuts that are being recommended. Eckhardt stated that it would take a lot of hours to determine this but a change could be made in the guidelines of the academic program reviews that would require more information in regard to ranking the program.

Bender stated that there should be an ad hoc committee consisting of members from the Senate Executive Committee or Senate and people from the APC to work on suggesting clarification of the procedures. Eckhardt suggested that there also be a representative from ASUN.

Bender stated that the subcommittee should be charged with looking at the possibility of amending the existing procedures to bring them in line with criticisms that were voiced during the 2003 budget cuts: improving and refining the present procedures, transparency, faculty participation, access to participation, and participation of the chair of the APC and Faculty Senate President in scheduling meetings.

Lindquist pointed out that UAAD and UNOPA should be represented as well.

Shea stated that the Senate attempted to make changes to the procedures several years ago and spent nearly two years working on this. He noted that a draft of alternative procedures was written and shared with the Chancellor but he rejected it. He pointed out that the Chancellor's rejection, and the lack of consensus that we needed to keep pushing on this, caused the draft to fade away. He pointed out that we are now in a situation where we wish something had been done. He noted that we really need support from across the campus in order to get any changes made. Otherwise the administration will say that it is just a group of people that want the changes.

Eckhardt stated that part of this is the education of our peers. He stated that we need to point out to them that this is a critical issue. He stated that he believes this has to be an organic growth out of the present procedures. He pointed out that the Chancellor would be more open to change if there was a modification of the present procedures. He noted that this is not meant to be a confrontational issue.

Lindquist stated that he thought the subcommittee was a good idea. He asked if there are APC members who are willing to participate. Eckhardt stated that one problem that needs to be considered is continuity. Shea agreed and noted that on the previous

subcommittee there was an ASUN representative but the person changed and the new one had a radically different view from the previous member. Eckhardt suggested having a graduate student representative elected by ASUN with the understanding that this committee could take some time to accomplish its task.

Lindquist asked if the idea is to have two members from APC, two from the Senate, and one each from ASUN, UAAD, and UNOPA. Fech asked how soon the subcommittee should be formed. Eckhardt stated that ASUN, UAAD, and UNOPA should be asked if they want to participate on the subcommittee.

Lindquist noted that a number of Executive Committee members were absent and suggested that a vote be taken through email or at the next meeting of the Committee to see if they agree that a subcommittee should be formed.

Shea noted that there is a strong presence of administrators on the APC. He stated that he has heard that faculty contribution on the APC can sometimes be suppressed by the administrators. He asked if this is true. Eckhardt stated that it is a function of what faculty members get elected to the APC. He pointed out that some administrators have been reasonably understanding of the faculty and the faculty can vote out the administrators if they are unified in their vote. He stated that the real problem with the APC is continuity of service.

4.0 Announcements

Fech reported that he met with ASUN President Megan Collins, who has a strong interest in keeping the peer-to-peer counseling center going. He noted that someone will be hired in August to help with the center. He stated that the center could be helpful to students, especially those with student loans, because they do not have much financial experience.

Fech stated both he and Collins discussed the Regents elections. He noted that the idea of holding a joint Regents candidates forum in the future was discussed.

McCullough stated that she didn't have any problem with the candidates for Regent speaking with the Senate. She noted that it can be difficult to get a large group of faculty together. Shea stated that having candidates speak to the Senate might make the candidates think about their impact and what they have to do with the faculty. He noted that at first he had some misgivings about the candidates speaking to the Senate but in the end he wished he had asked more questions of them.

Konecky pointed out that nobody really knew what to expect since this is the first time this has happened with the Senate. She stated that she thinks it's a good idea to do this with the Senate because the meeting is open to the public as well.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Change in Senate Elections

Fech suggested that the Committee deliberate at some time whether to change the date of elections for the Executive Committee. He noted that if it was done earlier, such as in March, it would give the new officers time to transition into their position better.

Griffin stated that this was discussed several years ago by the Executive Committee. It was felt that the new senators should have the opportunity to vote for the officers. She pointed out that if this was changed the Senate bylaws would need to be changed.

Shea stated that there should be more than one candidate running for office on the election ballot. McCollough pointed out that when salary increases are based on 100% merit but merit does not include service work, it is difficult to get people to participate.

Shea agreed and stated that there needs to be some change. He noted that the Executive Committee needs to continue bringing this issue up with the administrators. He pointed out that one way to keep the faculty under control is to not recognize service work which would keep more faculty members from participating.

Stock noted that in terms of salary raises in departments, service may be looked at but teaching and research are definitely more heavily weighted in the decision process.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, July 8th at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office, 420 University Terrace. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and David Rapkin, Secretary.